

Parousia

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THAT OTHER GOSPEL



by
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One definition in Webster's dictionary for *frustration* is "to cause feelings of discouragement or bafflement in." This definition properly explains my present state of mind when it comes to the way Bible teachers interpret the Olivet Discourse. The Olivet Discourse (Matthew 24:1-31) is the primary end-times sermon of Christ in the Gospels and outlines specific events that lead up to a specific conclusion. It is a conclusion that stirs up much debate—thus my frustration. In a local Christian library, I looked at more than 100 commentaries on the Olivet Discourse in Matthew's Gospel. On one end of the spectrum, there are those who do not believe that Jesus said one single word of Matthew 24:1-31 and that none of what is indicated has, is, or will ever happen. On the opposite

end of the spectrum are those who not only believe that Jesus said it, but that every single word indicated in Matthew 24:1-31 will be fulfilled in the fullest sense possible. It is baffling that such wide and diverse opinions about this precious passage of Scripture permeate the Body of Christ.

There are two conclusions taught about Matthew 24:1-31 which are particularly troubling. Pretribulationists argue that the Olivet Discourse applies only to the nation of Israel and has no instruction for the Church of Jesus Christ. Preterists¹ argue that the Olivet Discourse is a prophecy concerning the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and was fulfilled in A.D. 70. These two groups attempt to base their faulty conclusions on equally faulty interpretations of

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specific textual details. One such error is the careless assumption that a word means the same thing regardless of where, when and how it is used in the New Testament. The technical name for this type of error is *illegitimate identity transfer*.²

The unfortunate misunderstandings and incorrect summations proposed by pretribulationists and preterists are manifested through this error in the case of Matthew 24:14, which says, “And this *gospel* of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.”

In this verse, pretribulationists and preterists rob the term *gospel* of its intended meaning. They insist that *gospel* refers to *the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for sin*.³ This incorrect meaning of the term is then used to support a faulty fulfillment. In the case of the preterists, the false conclusion is that the text has been fulfilled in the events of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The pretribulationists, on the other hand, wrongly conclude

that the text finds its fulfillment during Daniel’s Seventieth Week and precedes Christ’s coming at Armageddon. It is the thesis of this article that the correct understanding of the word *gospel* in Matthew 24:14 points to a future literal fulfillment of the Olivet Discourse and that the Olivet Discourse gives a specific outline of the end-times including the timing of the rapture of the church.

The Timing of Matthew 24:14

Dr. Stanley Toussaint suggests that Matthew 24:14 refers to eschatological times just before the “great tribulation” period.⁴ There are several reasons that this author agrees with Dr. Toussaint’s conclusion that the text is exclusively futuristic and does not relate to the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (as the preterists teach) or to a progressive unfolding of the church age (as John F. Walvoord teaches).

First, Jesus’ initial comparison of this time, in part, as “the beginning birth pangs,” followed by the “hard labor” associated with the great tribulation of Antichrist, focuses on the conclusion of this time period rather than the beginning of it. The inception and course of a pregnancy is not in focus

here. Labor pains are intimately connected with the delivery. Nothing about the A.D. 70 destruction of Jerusalem concerned the physical delivery of the Jews or the church. Second, Jesus’ use of the term *end* in verses 6, 13, and 14 deals directly with the disciples’ question concerning the end of the age. This does not refer to end of the Jewish age; that event occurred on the day of Pentecost⁵ which transpired 53 days later. Matthew identified *the end of the age* with the specific time when God will deliver the righteous and destroy the wicked (Matt. 13:39).

The third support is Jesus’ identification of this time period with the “abomination of desolation which was spoken of through Daniel the prophet” (Matt. 24:15). Mark 13:14, which is almost identical to Matthew 24:14, uses “the masculine participle to modify a neuter noun (which) suggests that Mark found a personification of the abomination in some concrete figure of history.”⁶ In other words, the “abomination of desolation” is a person. Paul identified this person when he writes, “...the man of lawlessness... the son of perdition who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God,” (2 Thess. 2:3b-4). Daniel 9:27 indicated that this event would signal the *midpoint* of a seven year covenant between the “prince who is to come,” the nations, and Israel. Jesus’ indication that this prophetic portion was yet future relative to the time of His speaking established a very important timeline concerning the “end of the age.” The destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 did not fit the seven year time frame outlined in the book of Daniel. Equally, no event or person remotely represented the “Abomination of Desolation.” Therefore, the three and a half years of “beginning birth pangs” precedes the three and a half years of “great tribulation” (hard labor), and the Olivet Discourse’s fulfillment is yet future.

The Preaching of the Gospel

Matthew 24:14 reads, “And this *gospel* of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.” Some careless readers assume that the term “gospel,” when used in the New Testament, always refers to *the good news of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin so that people can go to heaven when they die*. With this assumption about Matthew 24:14, they hastily concluded that Jesus taught that when everyone in the world has heard the “gospel that Jesus saves,” the end (of the age)

will come. How many missionaries have been driven by this false notion? This is the interpretation of this passage by many pretribulational mission agencies, even though taking this position destroys the very heart of their “any moment” rapture, imminency!

The preterists also use this false notion as one of the primary pillars to support their position. Preterists teach that every detail of Matthew 24 was fulfilled in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Notice David Chilton’s arguments when explaining the meaning of Matthew 24:14 when he writes,

At first glance, this seems incredible. Could the Gospel have been preached to the whole world within a generation of these words? The testimony of Scripture is clear. Not only *could* it have happened, but *it actually did*. Proof? A few years before the destruction of Jerusalem, Paul wrote to Christians in Colossae of “the Gospel which has come to you, just as *in all the world also* it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing” (Colossians 1:5-6), and exhorted them not to depart “from the hope of the Gospel that you have heard, *which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven*” (Colossians 1:23).⁷

This is a classic example of illegitimate identity transfer as well as a poor apprehension of the New Testament’s use of hyperbole—an exaggeration. Paul writes in Romans 15:20, “. . . I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation. . . .” Clearly Paul’s goal in ministry was to preach to people groups who had not as yet heard the gospel of Christ. He relates to the Romans that his plans were to “come to you (the Romans) whenever I journey to Spain.” The only logical conclusion is that Christ had not been preached in Spain. There is not one historical piece of evidence that the gospel of Christ was preached in Spain before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Paul is using the same type of language as the crowd does in Acts 17:6 when they say, “These who have turned the world upside down have come here too.” It does not mean the “world” literally, but a great number of people in the world. The preterists are wrong concerning the universal proclamation of the gospel prior to A.D. 70. This rather poor attempt at exegesis grows out of a false assumption about the meaning of “gospel” in Matthew 24:14.

What Gospel?

What Matthew doesn’t mean in this context, is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ! Let me explain.

AND THIS GOSPEL OF
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MATTHEW 24:14



το ευαγγελιον (the good news)“is a compound of ευ and αγγελια, “good” and “message.” One key to gaining a correct understanding of Matthew’s use of the term *gospel* is understanding how the term was used during the time Jesus lived in Israel. This is important because words tend to change in meaning over a period of time. A good example of this is the English word *charity*. The 1611 King James translation of the Bible used this word as a translation of the Greek word *agape*. At the time the translators were working on the King James Bible, *charity* was an excellent word to use because at that time it meant “Christian love.” However, the word has come to mean “an organization or fund set up to help the needy.” The term *gospel* has a similar history. Originally, it meant the *reward* given to the messenger for bringing good news. By the time of Christ, the term “gospel” was used to mean the *good news* that the messenger had brought.⁸ During the time Jesus lived on earth, any *good news* was considered a *gospel*. However, about 30 years after the

death of Jesus Christ, the Apostle Paul began to use ευαγγελιον to refer to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for sin. He writes in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you... that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures...” In about 200 A.D., the term *gospel* came to be a technical term referring to a biography.⁹ Thus, we have the biography (the Gospels) of Christ in four versions. Understanding the different meanings a word can have, and when each meaning was popular, is critical to discovering the intended meaning of a written document like the Bible. During

the public ministry of the Lord Jesus, the term *gospel* simply meant *good news*.

A second key to discovering the intended meaning of the word *gospel* in Matthew 24:14 is the chronology of Jesus’ ministry. Luke 16:16 states, “The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until (the ministry of) John (the Baptist started); since then the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.” This verse sets

a very important time indicator for us. Luke tells us that the ministry of John the Baptist initiated a new message in Israel—“The gospel of the kingdom of God.” This is the same message Matthew indicates Jesus began preaching after He was baptized by John in the Jordan River, “Now Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of kingdom...” (Matt. 5:23). It is important to remember that this time period covers the very first few days of Our Lord’s public ministry. Another very important time indicator occurs in Matthew 16:21-23 which records,

From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, “Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!” But He turned and said to Peter, “Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.”

Notice the key phrase, “From that time.” The Greek language here is very precise—Matthew is speaking of a very *definite* point in time. As best as can be determined, this statement of Jesus was uttered *near the end* of His Galilean ministry which would be about *two years* after He was baptized by John in the Jordan River. “From that time,” (from approximately the mid-point of Our Lord’s public ministry) He began to clearly set forth the gospel of Christ—the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus for the sins of the world. Peter’s response indicates that this is the first time that he either heard or understood this message. It is this author’s belief that this was the *first time* in Jesus’ ministry that He clearly set forth what was to become the gospel of His death, burial and resurrection for sin. Two facts support this conclusion. First, the phrase “from that time” means a point in time before which Jesus did not show His disciples this truth.¹⁰ Second, Peter rebukes Jesus for teaching the death, burial and resurrection motif which, after that time, became the heart of the gospel of Christ.

But Matthew 4:23 tells us that “Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom (of God),” which occurred *long before* He established the gospel of the death, burial and resurrection. There is no indication in Scripture that Peter rebuked the Lord for teaching the *gospel of the kingdom*. Instead, Luke 9:2

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THIS GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

indicates that Jesus sent the Twelve out to preach “the kingdom of God.” It was Jesus’ comments about being put to death that set Peter’s teeth on edge. The difference between Peter’s initial acceptance of the *gospel of the kingdom* and his initial rejection of the *gospel of Christ* argues strongly that *they are not one and the same*.

The Good News of the Reign of God

Matthew 24:14 contains a very important indicator as to which gospel is intended. Notice, “And this gospel of the kingdom...” The word *kingdom* (βασιλειᾶς), for Matthew, points to a person (God the Father) not a place. The modern reader usually thinks of a kingdom as a geographical area with a king and his subjects. Such an idea is immediately misleading when it comes to the New Testament. D.A. Carson is very helpful at this point when he writes,

If there is one thing on which N.T. scholars agree in relation to the kingdom of God, it is that the English word ‘kingdom’ is now an unfortunate attempt to render the Greek ‘basileia’... a better translation would be ‘reign’ or ‘sovereignty’... (T)he kingdom of God’... is not a ‘thing’. It is the abstract idea of God being king, his sovereignty, his control of his world and its affairs... So the phrase ‘the kingdom of God’ is telling us something about God (the fact that he reigns), not describing something called ‘the kingdom.’

Carson echoes the words of Vincent Taylor who wrote, “The difficulty of translating βασιλειᾶς is well known. At present there is a strong tendency...to render it by ‘kingly rule’ or ‘reign’ rather than by ‘kingdom’ or ‘realm.’”¹¹

The problem is not the term *kingdom*, but the false ideas the modern reader may have about what it meant in Jesus’ day. The attempt with any translation is to make the text as understandable as possible while maintaining God’s intended mean-

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ing. This does not mean that the term *kingdom* has a hidden (allegorical) meaning, but rather that the term *kingdom* has acquired a modern meaning that should not be read back into the biblical text. The kingdom of God refers to the reign that belongs to God the Father.

Matthew’s Use of “The Kingdom of God”

Matthew’s Gospel indicates four traits about the kingdom (reign) of God. First, men should pray for it to come. In the model prayer, Jesus instructs his disciples to pray, “Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come,” (Matt. 6:9-10). Second, men should seek it. Matthew 6:33 indicates “seek first the kingdom of God...” Third, Christ casting out demons evidences its authority. Matthew 12:28 says, “But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.” Fourth, no look-a-like Christians will be allowed into it (Matt. 13:41, 19:24, 21:31).

Two conclusions emerge from Matthew’s Gospel. First, the kingdom of God is both here and it is coming. Because Jesus Christ is God, His physical presence on earth meant the reign of God was on earth. Not in the fullest sense in which it will come, but present none the less. Yet, the reign of God is future. Mark 15:43 states, “Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God... went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.” God reigns in heaven today, but one day He will physically come to earth to reign. At that time, His will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6:10). Secondly, Matthew indicates that God will judge and remove all look-a-likes when He comes. Daniel Patte summarizes the reign of God clearly when he writes “...(it) refers to the aggressive manifestation of the

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power of God which asserts itself against satanic and demonic powers.” The coming of the kingdom of God means judgment for the wicked (Satan, demons, and man). A judgment which will mean the removal “all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness,” (Matt. 13:41). Therefore, the good news of the reign of God is yet future and will involve the judgment of God against all wickedness.

The Context of Matthew 24:14

Notice the first part of Matthew 24:14 again, “And *this* gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world...” The word *this* (τουτο) is a pronoun.¹³ It is very important. It functions like a giant shovel. It scoops up the content of verse 13 and dumps it into verse 14. Verse 13 of Matthew 24 gives us another very important part of the good news of the reign of God: “But he who endures to the end shall be *saved*.” Many make an incorrect assumption that since “saved,” generally speaking in the Scriptures, means *salvation from hell*, it must have that specific meaning every time it occurs in the New Testament. Therefore, when Matthew writes, “And he who endures to the end *shall be saved*,” some automatically think of spiritual salvation.

However, the Greek term for *saved* (σοζο) can mean either *physical or spiritual deliverance*. Matthew 8:25 illustrates the point well. “Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, “Lord, save us! We are perishing!” The disciples’ request was not to be spiritually saved so that they could go to heaven, but to be physically delivered so as not to sink into the sea of Galilee. This is the intended meaning in Matthew 24:13. Jesus promises physical deliverance to His faithful followers who endure to the end (of the age). This conclusion has further support in Matthew 24:22, “And unless those days (of persecution by Satan/Antichrist of God’s people) were shortened (amputated) no flesh would be saved (physically delivered); but for the elect’s sake those days (of persecution) will be shortened.” *Saved* in this verse refers to the physical deliverance of Christ’ faithful followers rather than their spiritual salvation.

Once the persecution of Satan/Antichrist starts, there is no scriptural support that many unsaved individuals will turn to God for spiritual salvation as pretribulationists believe and teach. Nothing about the great persecution of Satan/Antichrist will inspire sinners to seek salvation from God, partially in light of the cost associated with that change! With regard to unbelievers, Scripture says, “...God will send them strong delusions, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness,” (2 Thess. 2:11-12). Revelation 13:8 states, “And all who dwell on the earth will worship him (Antichrist) whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb...” And Revelation 14:9 states, “...If anyone worships the beast (Antichrist) and his image, and receives his mark on his forehead or on his hand, he himself shall also drink of the wine of the wrath of God... and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone...” With regard to so-called believers, Matthew 24:10-12 and 2 Thessalonians 2:3 indicate that they will fall away from the faith during this time, rather than face the persecution at the hands of Satan/Antichrist. Therefore, the elect

are those faithful followers of Christ who endure the persecution of Satan/Antichrist until the end of the age comes, when the salvation (physical deliverance) of God’s elect (the rapture) will initiate the Day of the Lord’s wrath on those who remain.

This is again confirmed in 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17 where we are told that it is not just those who are alive, but those “who are alive and remain” that “shall be caught up.” The word translated “remain” is used two times in the New Testament and is better translated “survive.” It tells the reader that those who are taken alive up into the heaven at the rapture, have survived something that demands survival, rather than just being “alive.” In other words, the living survivors will be the ones raptured. James Frame confirms this point:

(T)he exact contrast here is not between the living and dead at the *Parousia*; not between “we Christians who are alive” at the *Parousia* and the dead; but between “we Christians who live,” that is, “who continue to survive *until the Parousia*,” and the dead.¹⁴

Ceslas Spicq in his magnificent work, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, writes,

“...this verb is also used for human survivors... It is in this sense that 1 Thess 4:15, 17 contrasts the dead (literally, “those who have fallen asleep”)... and “we who are (still) alive, those left...”¹⁵

An interesting example of this term is found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the Septuagint. 2 Chronicles 34:21 records Josiah’s instructions to Hilkiah to “Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for *those who are left* in Israel and Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out on us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do according to all that is written in this book,” (italics added). These were survivors—survivors of God’s wrath. The opposite situation occurs in 1 Thessalonians 4:17—the surviving believers of Satan/Antichrist’s wrath will be the ones physically delivered at the rapture. Therefore, Matthew 24:13 contains a wonderful promise to the church and supports the prewrath position that pretribbers are wrong by limiting the application of the Olivet Discourse to Israel alone.

The concept of God’s physical deliverance of the righteous at the end of the persecution is a part of “the good news of the kingdom.” “The good news of the kingdom” concerns both the physical deliverance of the righteous and God’s judgment/removal of all wickedness at some point yet future. What a tremendous and glorious promise! The pretribulationists’ and preterists’ false interpretation of Matthew 24:13-14 has robbed the church of the “blessed hope.” That generation of the Body of Christ chosen to be present on earth during the “great tribulation” will be raptured in victory. God is not going to sneak in and take the church leaving the wicked guessing about what happened. The message of victory will be proclaimed by an angel and God will come and rescue the survivors and pour out the worst demonstration of His wrath the world will ever experience.

E R G O S P E L

A Witness to the Nations

Notice again Matthew 24:14, “And this gospel (good news) of the kingdom (reign of God) will be preached in all the world *as a witness to all the nations*, and then the end (of the age) will come.” The phrase “as a witness to all the nations” can have either of two meanings. It “can mean ‘for an evidence against’ or ‘for a witness to’.”¹⁶ Is God announcing His coming judgment so that the wicked will have no excuse or is God announcing His coming judgment so that all mankind will know that God’s judgment has begun? Matthew indicates that the announcement of the reign of God, where God will punish the wicked, precedes the coming of the end (of the age) during which time God’s Day of the Lord’s wrath will be poured out against all wickedness. Every indication is that the primary goal of the Day of the Lord’s wrath is to humble man. Isaiah 2:11 states, “The proud looks of man shall be humbled, the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.” The first order of business will be God’s notification of mankind that His wrath is beginning. There is to be no doubt in the minds of the unbelievers that the sign in the sun, moon and stars and the events that follow are anything but the wrath of God. Therefore, the purpose of the announcement is “for a witness to” all mankind.

The focus of “the preaching of the good news of the reign of God” is to “all the nations,” “in all the world.” The Lord Jesus indicates that the universal proclamation of the reign of God would immediately precede the end of the age (rapture/wrath of God). All the nations of the world will be made aware that God’s wrath is about to start, then the end of the age will come. Revelation 14:6-7 confirms our interpretation of Matthew 24:14. John writes,

And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, having *an eternal gospel* to preach to those who live on the earth, and to every nation and tribe and tongue and people; saying with a loud voice, “Fear God, and give Him glory, because the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.” (Italics added)

That John and Matthew are indicating the same event is supported by three facts.¹⁷ One, the timing is right. In the sequence of the Revelation of Jesus to John, the final expulsion of all wickedness prior to the physical reign of God will then be imminent. Two, the focus is right. All the nations of the world in Matthew’s Gospel becomes every nation, tribe, tongue and people for John’s Revelation. Three, the content is right. Beginning in verse seven, the angel gives us the content of the “eternal gospel.” The Angel preaches that the judgment of God is about to start and mankind should respond with humility. The verb *worship* (προσκυβεω) is an idiom that literally means ‘to incline the face to the ground,’ to prostrate oneself before someone as an act of reverence, fear, or supplication. This is how one normally expresses one’s allegiance to and regard for deity. He prostrates himself in worship.¹⁸ Thus, for man to worship, he must humble himself.

This is the proper response to the good news of the reign of God. This is the same message and response Christ preached from day one of His public ministry. Mark 1:14-15 says, “Now after John was put in

prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of God saying “The time is fulfilled, and kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” Christ’s message is rooted in the Old Testament. Jude 1:14 indicates that “Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied... Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of His angels *to execute judgment* on all, to convict all who are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds...” Immediately following the fall of man, God began to announce His intent to come to earth to judge the wicked. It is in this sense that this gospel is eternal. The reason repentance was, is, and will be a proper response to the announcement of God’s arrival to physically rule on earth is because He delivers the righteous, but destroys the wicked. To be counted among the wicked will not be popular when the reign of God begins on earth, therefore, man should humble himself and give God glory so as to escape the wrath. Unlike the persecution of Satan/Antichrist when few, if any, turn to God, some from many nations will seek God during the Day of the Lord’s wrath, (Zech. 14:16; Joel 2:32).

The final angelic sermon will focus on two inevitable events: that God is personally coming to physically deliver the faithful survivors of the persecution of Satan/Antichrist, and that simultaneously he will initiate judgment against all wickedness. This is the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Conclusion

A literal and exegetical translation of Matthew 24:13-14 says,

In contrast to the look-a-like Christians who fall away because of the persecution of Antichrist, he (the faithful followers) who endures to the end (of the age) shall be physically delivered and this good news of the reign of God—when God’s wrath is poured out on earth—will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, then the end (of the age) will come.

This correct translation, which includes the contextual details from Matthew 24:13-14, supports the end-time sequence of the Prewrath rapture position. As Jesus promised and Paul confirmed, the righteous survivors of Satan/Antichrist’s persecution will be physically delivered by the rapture. Paul clearly taught the Thessalonians that they could claim the promise that any Thessalonian survivors at Christ’s *parousia* would be delivered. This deliverance will occur at the same time the dead are resurrected. Thus, those Thessalonians who were dead and those who survived until Christ’s *parousia* would be reunited at that time—the same time Jesus indicated in the Olivet Discourse. This proves that the pretribulationists have incorrectly limited the Olivet Discourse to Israel alone. The correct translation also shows that the preterists’ position grossly erred in both the timing of the fulfillment of the events in Matthew 24 and the meaning of the term *gospel*. The Olivet Discourse is yet to be fulfilled and the good news of the reign of God will be preached before the end of the age comes.

Once the reader understands that the “great tribulation” is the wrath of Satan executed through the persecution of God’s elect by the Beast, Antichrist, (Matt. 24:15, 21-22; Rev. 12:12-13:7), the end-times se-

quence is clear. First, Antichrist begins to execute Satan's three-and-a-half-year wrath campaign against God's people. Satan's persecution will cause a great falling away of look-a-like Christians, (Matt. 24:10-12). After some time, when circumstances are bleak for God's elect, (Matt. 24:22), an angel will proclaim the good news of God's imminent arrival to rescue the survivors and punish the wicked, (Matt. 24:14, Rev. 14:6-7, I Thess. 4:15,17). Then the sign in the sun, moon and stars will be given which signals the imminent arrival of the wrath of God, (Matt. 24:29, Rev. 6:12-17). The earth now wrapped in total darkness, receives the light of the sign of the Son of Man, (Matt. 24:30). Then Christ comes on the clouds and sends His angels to gather together the living survivors after resurrecting the righteous dead, (Matt. 24:31; I Thess. 4:16-17). Finally, at the end of the age, the wrath of God comes upon the wicked, (Rev. 6:17, 8:5), and the gospel of the kingdom of God becomes a present reality as God reigns over the earth.

ENDNOTES

1. The word *preterist* is based on a Latin word "praeteritus," meaning "gone by." The basic idea is that of "past." This is a growing position within the Evangelical movement which adopts the position that Matthew 24 and the book of Revelation transpired in the past.
2. Barr, cited by Joseph C. Dillow, *The Reign of the Servant Kings* (Hayesville: Schoettle Publishing Co., 1993), 37.
3. Paul remarks in Galatians 1:8, "But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed..." refer to "the gospel of Christ," (Gal. 1:7). Paul's point is that there is only one gospel that saves a person from sin. Salvation from hell comes only by faith in Jesus Christ. However, there are other gospels.
4. Stanley D. Toussaint, *Behold the King*, (Portland: Multnomah Press, 1980), 272-273.
5. See the last issue of *Parousia* for a discussion of the beginning of the church age at Pentecost.
6. William L. Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, NICNT, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984) 467.
7. David Chilton, *The Great Tribulation* (Ft. Worth: Dominion Press, 1987) 10.
8. Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 88.
9. See note 20 in William L. Lanes commentary, *The Gospel According to Mark*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 44.
10. This particular Greek construction is used four times in the New Testament with this meaning. Matthew 4:17, 16:21, 26:16 and Luke 16:16.
11. Vincent Taylor, *Jesus and His Sacrifice* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1937) 8.
12. Daniel Patte, *The Gospel according to Matthew: A Structural Commentary on Matthew's Faith* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987) 177.
13. τούτο is a demonstrative, neuter pronoun. Daniel Wallace writes that "The neuter pronoun is the normal means of referring to an unspecified concept in Greek." τούτο, he writes, "regularly takes a conceptual antecedent." *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics*, Dr. Daniel Wallace, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 333, 335.
14. James Everett Frame, "Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians" in *The International Critical Commentary*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1960) 172.
15. Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, Translated and Edited by James D. Ernest in *Accordance: Software for Biblical Studies*
16. W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1997), 344.
17. Joachim Jeremias, one of the greatest New Testament scholars of this century, agrees that Matthew 24:14 and Revelation 14:6-7 refer to the same event. He writes, "I have attempted to show elsewhere that... euaggelion is used in the early pre-Pauline sense of Rev. 14:6f., where, in the hour of final fulfillment, an angelic voice proclaims "the everlasting gospel of triumph"... Hence we are to understand that 'the proclamation to all the world' will not be by men in the time before the Parousia, but by God's angel at the last day." Joachim Jeremias, *Jesus' Promise to the Nations* (London: SCM Press LTD, 1953) 22-23.
18. Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, Translated and Edited by James D. Ernest in *Accordance: Software for Biblical Studies*

Thank You

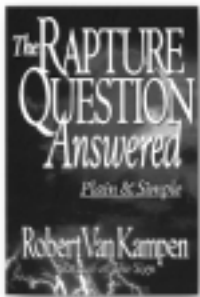


Over the past year, The Sign Ministries has increasingly received unsolicited monetary donations for the ongoing support of the ministry. We are very grateful to God for your generosity. During the next twelve months we have planned seven regional conferences, the addition of a new staff member, the production of new resource materials, and an expanded international ministry. If, after giving to your local church, you would like to financially support The Sign Ministries, we would be extremely grateful. Tax deductible gifts should be sent to: The Sign Ministries, P.O. Box 113, West Olive, Michigan, 49460.

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Ministry Update

God continues to bless The Sign Ministries' effort to teach biblical truth concerning the days that are yet before us. We appreciate each one of you and the many letters, emails, and telephone calls that come to us. The number of people calling our 800 number continues at a record pace. We are busy and if for some reason we do not respond to you please contact us again. We make every effort to respond to all inquires.

This past quarter we had the privilege of ministering at Good News Baptist Church in Mosinee, Wisconsin where Pastor Dass and his people were most receptive. At Calvary Baptist Church in Lamar, Colorado we had a wonderful time with Pastor Jeff Alexander and his people. April 30 - May 2 we held our first "Parousia Conference" in Holland, Michigan. It was no doubt, the greatest conference that we here at The Sign Ministries have been involved in. It was such a success that we have scheduled seven of these conferences for next year as well as one in Nashville, Tennessee, on September 10-12, 1998 and one in Wheaton, Illinois, on October 16-17, 1998. The middle of May brought us to Miami for the Spanish book-sellers "Expolit." We displayed "La Señal" and "El Rapto" (The Sign and The Rapture Question Answered, Plain and Simple in Spanish) and had the opportunity to conduct two seminars. In June we conducted conferences with Pastor Judd Bird and his people at Grace Community Church in Pleasant Valley, California and Pastor Gene Crowder and his folks at First Baptist Church in Maysville, Kentucky.

We are available to come to your church and present a multimedia presentation of "An Overview of End Times." If this would interest you, give us a call at 1-800-627-5134, and we would be delighted to arrange such a conference.



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Introducing...



The Sign Ministries Welcomes Bill Lee-Warner

Pastor Bill Lee-Warner has joined The Sign Ministries as National Instructor, and we welcome him to our team. A graduate of Oregon State University, Bill received his M.Div. from Western Evangelical Seminary. He recently pastored The Community Alliance Church in Havre, Montana, a position he had held since 1983. He and his wife Shirley have five children: Joshua, a recent college graduate; Suzannah, who is soon to be married; Rebecca, a college student; Jonathan, a high school senior; and Abby, a high school freshman. The Sign Ministries twice has had the opportunity of ministering in the church Bill pastored in Havre. Bill has been a wonderful pastor who has a deep desire to know and teach the Word of God in all its truth. His major responsibility with The Sign Ministries will be as a teacher of the prewrath position. He is a great addition to our ministry and is available to present the prewrath rapture position in your church. We are grateful to God for the ways that He is expanding The Sign Ministries.

Upcoming Events

Call The Sign Ministries at 1-800-627-5134 for more info!

JULY 13-17, 1998

The Master's Mission
Robbinsville, North Carolina

SEPTEMBER 10-12, 1998

Nashville Area Parousia
Conference
Brentwood, Tennessee

SEPTEMBER 18-20, 1998

Eagle Rock Baptist Church
Idaho Falls, Idaho

OCTOBER 9-11, 1998

Lytle United Methodist Church
Lytle, Texas

OCTOBER 16-17, 1998

Chicago Area Parousia
Conference
Wheaton, Illinois

OCTOBER 20-30, 1998

Ministry visit to
The Philippines

JANUARY 21-23, 1999

Houston Area Parousia
Conference
Houston, Texas

**JANUARY 26-FEBRUARY 6,
1999**

Ministry visit to
India

FEBRUARY 18-20, 1999

Northern Wisconsin Parousia
Conference
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

**FEBRUARY 23-MARCH 6,
1999**

Ministry visit to
Nigeria

MARCH 11-13, 1999

Philadelphia Area Parousia
Conference
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

MARCH 19-21, 1999

Norton Park Baptist Church
Smyrna, Georgia

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